

## Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 DAMASC 02565 101721Z  
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CU-02 SS-15 ONY-00 SSO-00 NEAE-00  
/028 W

-----101725Z 118498 /41

O 101411Z MAY 77  
FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3030

S E C R E T DAMASCUS 2565

STADIS//////////

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: SCUL PFOR SY US  
SUBJ: SIGNING OF CULTURAL AGREEMENT

REF: STATE 105903

1. SIGNING CEREMONY FOR CULTURAL AGREEMENT HAS BEEN SCHEDULED FOR 1200 NOON MAY 12 WITH AMBASSADOR AND DEPUTY MINISTER OF EDUCATION. SINCE AGREEMENT HAS BEEN OVER A YEAR IN NEGOTIATION WITH MANY INTERRUPTIONS AND DELAYS, I AM RELUCTANT AT THIS POINT TO SUGGEST CHANGE IN SIGNING ARRANGEMENTS.

2. BELIEVE HOWEVER THAT A VISIT BY DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY CHAPMAN DURING MAY 19-22 PERIOD WOULD BE VERY HELPFUL TO POST IN FOLLOWING UP AND PUBLICIZING CULTURAL AGREEMENT SINCE SIGNING CEREMONY ITSELF NOT LIKELY TO BE WIDELY PUBLICIZED BY SARG. CHAPMAN COULD MAKE CALLS ON MINISTERS OF CULTURE, EDUCATION, AND HIGHER EDUCATION, AS WELL AS ACTING RECTOR OF DAMASCUS UNIVERSITY AND OTHER OFFICIALS TO DISCUSS AGREEMENT AND POSSIBILITIES IT OFFERS FOR STRENGTHENING US-SYRIAN CULTURAL RELATIONS. FOR THIS PURPOSE, WE WOULD PREFER VISIT MAY 21-22, SINCE FRIDAY, MAY 20 IS LOCAL HOLIDAY.

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SECRET

PAGE 02 DAMASC 02565 101721Z

3. MAY 10 DAMASCUS PRESS BY SANA DATELINED GENEVA STATED "AT A DINNER HELD AFTER HIS TALKS WITH PRESIDENT AL-ASSAD, CARTER ADDED THAT 'A CULTURAL AGREEMENT HAS BEEN CONCLUDED BETWEEN SYRIAN AND THE USA.'" I DO NOT YET HAVE ANY OFFICIAL WORD AS TO WHAT TRANSPIRED IN GENEVA REGARDING THE CULTURAL AGREEMENT BUT ASSUME THE PRESIDENT WAS SPEAKING OF OUR

MUTUAL INTENTIONS.

4. REGARDING PROPOSAL TO BALANCE HIGH LEVEL VISIT TO BAGHDAD WITH ONE TO DAMASCUS, I DO NOT BELIEVE IT IS NECESSARY GIVEN INTENSITY OF OUR RECENT CONTACTS, FACT THAT WE HAVE ALREADY DISCUSSED SUBJECT WITH KHADDAM AND THAT WE INTEND KEEP SYRIANS FULLY INFORMED REGARDING PROGRESS IN OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH IRAQ. WE WOULD, HOWEVER, WELCOME CHAPMAN VISIT AS MEANS OF IMPROVING U.S.-SYRIAN CULTURAL TIES.

5. FYI: AMBASSADOR MURPHY IS SCHEDULED TO RETURN TO DAMASCUS EVENING WEDNESDAY, MAY 11, AND MAY WISH TO COMMENT FURTHER. END FYI.

PELLETREAU

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NNN

## Message Attributes

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**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
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**Decaption Note:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
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**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
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**Review Markings:**  
Margaret P. Grafeld  
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